

SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

FEEDBACK ON PERFORMANCE MEETINGS

5 February 2021

INTRODUCTION

One of the main responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is to hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. David Munro has set up a governance framework to discharge this duty. The main part of this framework is to hold six-weekly Performance Meetings where the Chief Constable reports on progress against the Police & Crime Plan and other strategic issues. This is supplemented by workshops and one to one discussions between the PCC and Chief Constable, and other senior officers, when required.

Every other performance meeting is webcast for the public and partners to view. The PCC chairs the meeting which is also attended by the Chief Executive and Treasurer from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). Other members of staff from the OPCC attend as required, depending on the agenda. The Chief Constable attends along with the Deputy Chief Constable and other force staff as required.

This report provides an update on the meetings that have been held and what has been discussed in order to demonstrate that arrangements for good governance and scrutiny are in place.

PERFORMANCE MEETINGS

Since the last report on performance meetings to the panel, two Performance Meetings have been held – 16 November 2020 and 21 December 2020.

16 November 2020 - Private Meeting

Agenda items were:

- Force Commitments
- Workforce Planning
- Budget Development
- Finance Report
- Prudential Indicators
- Performance Report
- Environmental Strategy
- Fleet Management
- Suicide Prevention

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The Chief Constable provided an update on how the new **Force Commitments** were being implemented. This included a board for governance and progress reports for staff and public.

A report was provided on progress being made to meeting the current year **workforce plans**. The force HR department has worked hard to keep recruitment on track and combined with slightly less leavers than would normally be expected, levels of police officers slightly exceeded the expected level in October 2020. Training was close to capacity. There were some concerns over 'reverse civilianisation' where there was potential for police officers to have to carry out operational staff roles, such as civilian investigators and more work will be done on this and brought back to the PCC. This then impacts on police officer visibility. Government Uplift funding is only for police officers, so where roles currently carried out by police staff are necessary (investigators, analysis, intelligence staff etc.) to support crime reduction and prevention, reverse civilianisation may occur. The PCC was not in support of this happening, considering that only roles that require a warrant card should be carried out by police officers.

The PCC and Chief Constable discussed the principles and initial assumptions for **budget development** 2021/22. There were many uncertainties with regard to the Government grant settlement level and timings so a number of scenarios were considered. There was an estimated £5m savings gap and the force was working with CIPFA to develop potential areas for savings.

The **Finance Report** was discussed. Headlines included an estimated year end revenue underspend of £0.7m and Capital underspend of £2.5m. Covid costs were discussed and it was reported that these are being monitored closely to ensure claims made to Government were correct.

The **Prudential Indicators** were presented to the PCC as required by statute and were approved, as was the Minimum Revenue Position (MRP) statement.

With regard to force **performance**, a new scorecard was presented as the force was using a new performance platform. There was still a high vacancy rate for detective constables but it is hoped that this will improve following the introduction of a new investigative structure. Confidence in Surrey Police had improved from 88% to 89.1%. Solve rates still remain a challenge for the force, including for high harm crimes and burglary. More effort was being placed into 'taken into consideration' for burglary offences to try and improve the solve rate. The 101 answering times were at 3 minutes and force meetings were looking at how this could be improved.

An update was provided on the force's **Environmental Strategy**. This strategy was being developed to meet the aim set out by the PCC and Chief Constable for the force to be carbon neutral by 2030. The strategy is currently being developed and is expected to be in place by February 2021. It will cover fuels, emissions and some purchased goods and services.

A recent audit report had flagged some issues in **Fleet Management** and the PCC had asked for a report on how these issues were being addressed. The Finance Director reported that the recommendations were being implemented. This included better telematics to look at vehicle usage and numbers required. From this the force can look at reducing the number of vehicles in the fleet due to current under-usage.

An update was provided on a new post for **Suicide Prevention**. There has been a significant increase in mental health demand and suicides, particularly during the pandemic and the force were looking at longer term funding for this post.

21 December 2020 - Webcast Meeting

Agenda items were:

- Public update on Covid and Brexit
- Performance Report
- Finance Report
- File Quality
- Retail Crime
- Community Resolutions

The Chief Constable provided a webcast public update on the new **Covid** tiers and regulations as well as **Brexit**. At the time of writing this report, most of Surrey had been recently put into Tier 4 and the Chief Constable outlined the rules in place. In relation to Brexit, the police were planning for all eventualities, particularly with regard to travel restrictions and mutual aid to Kent Police.

The **Performance Report** covered the range of police and crime plan issues, including reported crime levels, solve rates, problem solving, call handling and victim satisfaction. Surrey has the lowest reported crime levels and is the 5th safest place to live in England and Wales. Crime levels had fallen in most categories during the pandemic, with the exception of harassment crimes. Non-violence domestic abuse cases also continue to be a concern for police. The overall solve rate was at 14.3%, but the Chief Constable said he aspired for the force to do much better. In line with the vision to focus on crime prevention, the Force has set up a Problem Solving Team which is led by a Chief Inspector to improve the quality of problem solving investigations across the county. There are currently 385 problem-solving plans across the force. Surrey Police have been shortlisted for the national Tilley awards for their Problem Solving approach.

Emergency call (999) response times were relatively stable with very short average answering times, well within the 10 second target. 101 call answering performance had improved in November to an average of 1 minute 30 seconds, which the Chief Constable felt was satisfactory performance. The introduction of digital 101 means people can now communicate with Surrey Police via social

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media. The Policing Minister Kit Malthouse recently gave positive feedback in saying that he was pleased with Surrey Police's social media presence. Victim satisfaction had recently improved, up 3% on previous levels. The Chief Constable was aware that the force needs to improve on keeping people informed and plans were in place to address this.

The Finance Director reported that the force were doing well in **managing finances**. The Government have assisted with grants for PPE and with surge funding for overtime. They have also given assistance with loss of income incurred. The force has achieved its savings plan, held back expenditure where possible and have a slight underspend on the revenue budget at this time. Current risks were around Police overtime in relation to Covid, capital receipts, and forensic costs emerging.

The Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) reported that there had been a particular focus within Surrey Police on **file quality** in recent months. Surrey are doing well at securing guilty pleas at first appearances at Crown Court and are just above the National average ranked at 19, which is in the top half of the country. A guilty plea at a first hearing saves a lot of time and money. The DCC said the force need to be better in raising their national standard for file quality, ensuring that efficient checks and balances are in place before files go to the CPS. There was an oversight board in place to keep a focus on improving this area.

The PCC expressed great concern that the pandemic had seen a delay in justice being provided through the court system. There is much work to be done to reduce the backlog in cases. The DCC noted that there had been a slight improvement in Magistrates Courts catching up with the backlog. The delays are still increasing in Crown Court, which places an additional strain on the Victims and Witness Care Unit in keeping people informed. The force are doing everything they can to tackle this.

The force launched a new commitment in September around **Retail Crime**, with Chief Inspector Offord leading in this area. 5% of all crime across the county has a business crime attached. The force look for solvability factors, threat, harm, risk and vulnerability. The message to all retail owners is to report, report, report to police. Shoplifting is a crime no matter how small it may seem. The force offer free crime prevention advice via their Designing Out Crime Officers who are specially trained to do so.

The DCC explained that Surrey has a high number of **community resolutions** compared to other forces by design. The force adopted Checkpoint, which manages out-of-court disposals. This saves money and helps keep Surrey safer and is a proven deterrent to suspects reoffending. Victims are also more satisfied with community resolutions than when the offender goes to court. The force are regularly auditing the Community Resolutions to ensure that correct process are being followed and that there is a rationale behind the decision-making.

The webcast and public papers for this meeting can be viewed at:
<https://www.surrey-pcc.gov.uk/2020/12/pcc-performance-meeting-with-the-chief-constable-21-december-2020/>

Planned meetings are:

- 1 February 2021 - private meeting
- 30 March 2021 - webcast meeting

The following dates are also currently planned, but dates to be confirmed and whether they are private or public following the PCC election:

- 7 June 2021
- 12 July 2021
- 6 September 2021
- 16 November 2021
- 20 December 2021

RECOMMENDATION

That the Police and Crime Panel note the update on the PCC's Performance Meetings.

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